Ambassadors in Action

Winter 2003 Edition

NEW NAME...SAME IDEA

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. As you can see, it has a bold new name - *Ambassadors in Action.* But the intent of the newsletter - to provide a regular communication vehicle for our community of Ambassadors where we can share information on our experiences and ideas - remains the same.

What's Been Happening?

☑ Ambassadors represented their ministries at showcase booths set up at the cross-government orientation event held for interns and recent graduates in the Alberta public service. Ambassadors were also invited to participate as advisors to the employee orientation website team.

☑ More career fairs. We've been busy promoting the Alberta public service at educational institutions across the province! Corporately, we've participated in career fairs at Lethbridge Community College, Concordia University College, University of Alberta Summer Job Fair, Grande Prairie Regional College and Mount Royal College.

☑ We were invited to represent the Alberta public service at a few career forums being organized by the University of Alberta, and were able to provide an Ambassador for the Marketing & Public Relations career forum.

☑ In response to a request from Grant MacEwan, a few Ambassadors joined forces to develop and present an information session for Management Studies Program students. Have a look at Christine's article, found on page 3 of this newsletter.

☑ The Professional Development Day for Ambassadors, held on December 6th, was a success! We started the day with an orientation session for new Ambassadors, who were joined later in the day by Ambassadors interested in the additional training offered: On Campus Excellence, Group Exercise (to discuss ministry-specific recruitment challenges, and identify potential sources of candidates they may want to target in their Ambassador role); Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy (objectives and resources/supports available); and Presentation Skills for Ambassadors. Thirty-one Ambassadors attended at least part of the day - 100% of the participants were satisfied with their orientation, and 100% felt the additional training session was valuable to attend. Ambassadors seemed to particularly enjoy the Presentation Skills session, as well as the opportunity to network with other Ambassadors and find out more about the different kinds of work performed in government.

☑ Several Ambassadors in the human resources occupation agreed to have their names put forward as potential mentors for a new mentorship program being developed for students in Grant MacEwan's HR Program.

Thanks again to the Ambassadors who participated in these events!

High Schools are Fertile Ground for Great Future Employees

Submitted by: Fred Lee, P.Eng.
Construction Engineer, Southern Region
Alberta Transportation

Recently, I attended the Father Lacombe High School's biannual Career Fair in Calgary with Jason Dallaire, Bridge Engineer in the Southern Region. The Father Lacombe High School is one of a few high schools that offers an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program in Calgary. By enrolling in the IB Program, the students can obtain matriculation accreditation, recognized by most post-secondary institutions worldwide, and enhance their ability to further education overseas. It is, therefore, very popular among career-minded young students.

The Father Lacombe Career Fair was spearheaded by Ms. Liana McArthur, Career Practitioner of the school, and it was very well organized. The 1000 or so students at the high school were allowed into the fair in three waves. Some students also brought their parents with them.

Representation was from approximately 40 organizations. There were many post secondary institutions, such as the University of Calgary, Mount Royal College, Alberta College of Art and Design and SAIT. There were professional organizations, such as APPEGA, ASET, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta, Calgary Construction Association and United Steel Workers Union. There were career counseling and recruiting agencies such as Youth Employment Centre and Careers the Next Generation. The Alberta public service was represented by our booth and an Alberta Environment booth. There was plenty of APS competition for potential employees - a number of private and public sector organizations such as the City of Calgary, Canadian Forces, and Calgary Regional Health Authority.

Jason and I saw the Career Fair as a great opportunity for organizations to showcase themselves as employers of choice when the students have completed their formal education a few years down the road. We took advantage of the opportunity and did our best to spread the message around that the Alberta Government in general, and the Department of Transportation in particular, have great and rewarding opportunities awaiting the students.

We were armed with a Career Fair kit, provided by Betty Farnsworth of the Human Resources Branch, as well as two big boxes full of "Think and Drive" grab bags, provided by Len Bergen of Inspection Services. The one-page pamphlets and the plastic rulers, showing the web site address, were very well received by the students. The students loved the candies. The grab bags were an instant hit and made Jason and I very popular guys at the fair. I am sure the message "Think and Drive" has gotten through to a lot of the young Father Lacombe students we met, who may have just received or will be receiving their driver's license very soon. We killed two birds with one stone!

I had a wonderful time talking to these energetic and enthusiastic students. We found the Father Lacombe staff very supportive, and other fair participants friendly and resourceful. It was a satisfying, fulfilling, and great learning experience for me.

I think participation in high school career fairs, such as this one at the Father Lacombe High School, is an excellent way for us to approach potential future employees. We need to raise the awareness level of the huge career opportunities and benefits of working for the Alberta public service by spreading the positive message out to more people while they are still young. We should participate in more high school career events in the future. Alberta high schools are fertile ground for great future employees!

Ambassadors Get Down to Business with Grant MacEwan Students

Submitted by: ***Christine Wronko***
Public Affairs Officer

I recently had the pleasure of joining three other Ambassadors to talk about the Alberta public service with a group of Grant MacEwan College students. Kerri Schlemko, Staffing & Workforce Development Consultant; Jaison Lee, Tax Auditor; Mark Diner, Strategic Analyst; and I provided insight into our day-to-day activities.

We talked to more than 50 students currently enrolled in the two-year Management Studies diploma program at the City Centre Campus. These students are learning business fundamentals from management and accounting to business communications skills and human resources.

Like my colleagues, I gave them a glimpse into the work I do in my job as a Public Affairs Officer with Alberta Finance Communications. I also told them about the opportunities and experiences I've had as an employee of the Public Affairs Bureau, whether it was working on the Alberta government's communications team to address the Kyoto Protocol, taking part in cross-ministry focus groups or participating in the many professional development courses.

I found the hour-long session to be a very educational experience. I had the chance to interact with my cross government colleagues and learned more about the kinds of work being done in other departments. I was also able to further develop my own communications and presentation skills, which like so many people, I find to be a very nerve-wracking experience.

I highly encourage other Ambassadors to participate in similar events when opportunities arise.

Ambassador Mentoring Role

Submitted by: ***Kerri Schlemko***
Ambassador Program Coordinator
Personnel Administration Office

> *Mentoring is a one-to-one professional relationship between people with different levels of experience and expertise. A mentor can help a less experienced person learn the skills, attitudes and values required to be successful in the workplace.*
> *—Guidelines For Mentoring in the Alberta Public Service.*

Mentoring was identified as an area of interest when you completed your volunteer profile as part of "signing up" to be an Ambassador - and a lot of you were interested in this role!

The Lead Ambassador team discussed the mentoring role, in terms of how it can be applied specifically to the Ambassador Program, how it fits with existing mentoring programs, and what support would be needed to prepare Ambassadors for this role.

The team felt that we should keep the mentoring role quite simple and informal at this stage of the Ambassador Program. If you are interested in mentoring an individual who doesn't currently work in your ministry, I invite you to make direct contact with an organization to explore the possibility. And if I'm approached by an organization looking for mentors from the Alberta public service, I'll work through the Lead Ambassadors to assess interest in participating.

If you are interested in more information to help you prepare for a mentoring role, you can access the *Guidelines for Mentoring in the Alberta Public Service* at http://www.pao.gov.ab.ca/learning/mentoring/index.html. As well, you may want to check with your Lead Ambassador to see if your ministry has its own mentoring program/guidelines.

Some interesting websites you might want to explore...

- www.alis.gov.ab.ca The Alberta Learning Information Service website, a partnership between Alberta Human Resources & Employment and Alberta Learning, provides Albertans with career, learning and employment information. There is a wealth of information that you might personally find very useful, and with regard to your Ambassador role, it's a good resource to research potential target pools of candidates (e.g., educational institutions and the programs offered).
- www.servicealberta.ca Service Alberta is a cross-ministry initiative that provides one-stop access to services and products from all Alberta government ministries. In support of this initiative, we will be providing Service Alberta marketing materials at the corporate career fair booth.

We Want to Hear From You!

We're interested in your thoughts and ideas! If you have feedback on the newsletter, if you would like to become involved with the regular production of the newsletter, or if you have an article you would like to contribute, please contact kerri.schlemko@gov.ab.ca.